

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

5 A contents distribution system comprises a contents  
provider and a user's portable terminal player. The contents  
6 provider, which comprises a contents server and a user  
information database storing therein user download  
information and right information, distributes contents over  
a communication network according to the SDMI  
check-in/check-out rule. The user's portable terminal player  
10 comprises a recording medium playback function that plays back  
the contents downloaded on a recording medium and a check-in  
function that returns a playback right to the contents provider.  
When the contents are distributed to the portable terminal  
player, the contents provider manages contents distribution  
15 according to the check-in/check-out rule in such a way that  
the contents provider manages the number of check-outs of the  
contents to the user and, when the user checks in the distributed  
contents, the portable terminal player erases a contents  
playback encryption key and a file name and, at the same time,  
20 returns the playback right to the user information database.